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Pulpit Preaching

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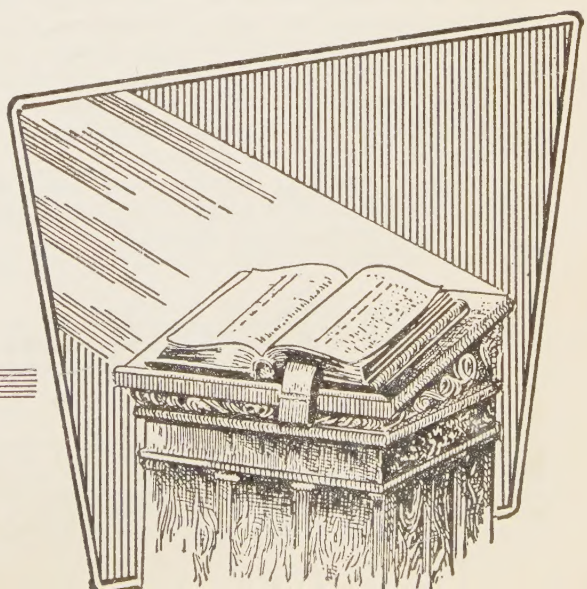

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

This month's themes are "Great Words of Faith: Love," the second in a series, and "Life in Christ." The January themes will be "The Prodigal Son" and "Lenten Emphases." The February subjects will be "Words from the Cross" and "Psalm 23," and March themes will be "The Easter Confidence" and Great Words of Faith: the Church.'

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Books For Pulpit Preaching

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, edited by F. L. Cross, is a superior reference book which includes more than 6,000 articles of various length and 4,500 bibliographies. The authoritative and comprehensive character of the book makes it the kind of source book which ministers will use continuously. (Oxford University Press, 1492 pp., $17.50.)

Twelve Baskets Full, a volume of stewardship stories and resource materials by Margaret T. Applegarth, will be welcomed by church leaders and Sunday school teachers. Spirited stories —having titles such as "Charity in a Cold Climate, "Tied to His Mother's Purse Strings," "Checkbook into Prayerbook" and "Pennywise and Otherwise" — and many pertinent poems, Bible verses, and quotable prose selections furnish an abundance of materials for sermons to adults and children. (Harper & Brothers, 245 pp., $3.)

Pastoral Prayers for the Church Year by Samuel J. Schmiechen contains 125 prayers, identified according to purpose or occasion and representing a consistently excellent content, and also invocations, offertory prayers, and prayers of confession and intercession. (Abingdon Press, 144 pp., $2.)

This Is America's Hour is a book of five sermon-commentaries on our Christian heritage and responsibility. Written with passion and spiritual discernment, the book has a vital personal and national message, much useful homiletical substance, and many significant facts. (Fleming H. Revell Co., 128 pp., $2.)

Seventeen 'teaching sermons" on basic beliefs are in **Beliefs That Matter** by Ganse Little.

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My Debt to Novelists

FRED E. LUCHS
First Congregational Church, Evanston, Illinoi

Preparing for summer vacation reading las July 1, I packed Niebuhr, Tillich, Barth an Brunner. But when I returned home, lo Nie buhr had been skimmed, but the other volume had not been touched.

I got lost in the boyhood library of my hom town and there fell among the flesh pots o great fiction. What did I lose by walking wit Arnold Bennet, Thomas Mann, John Galswor thy, John Steinbeck, Thomas Wolfe and a hos of kindred writers, thus passing by the privi lege of gleaning thirteen sermon outlines fro the great modern theological masters?

I lost the whole world of thirteen sermons but I gained an insight into my soul and th souls of my fellowman. By living with thes creative folk, I learned to know more intimatel the people who sorrowed me in the daily toi But most of all I became better acquainted wit me.

From the great novelists I learned as muc about man the sinner as I could have learne had I studied the great theologians. But, as read fiction, I saw the sinner in the flesh. H was not an abstract sinner. He was flesh an blood. He punished a rival. He absconded wit another mans wife. He killed a competitor o Main Street. He beat a child to death in th woods. The author did not scream in my ear that Man is a sinner. I could see the black, gor sin. But the sinner was never the man down th street. The sinner was I. By the powers of em pathy, the writers took me inside the sinner an said, 'Look, this is you." And I came away know ing how it feels to be mocked and jeered. An I said, "There, but for the grace of fiction, g I." I loved that sinner, for he was Fred Luchs

These novelists went beyond sympathy in th treatment of character; they had more than feel ing "for" their characters. They wrote with em pathy; they had feeling "with" their charac ters. They got inside their characters so tha we saw them as individuals and not as heroes or villains, or dupes. Thus they painted then as individuals and not in aggregates. Thes

(Continued on Page 17)

Pulpit Preaching

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The Meanings of Love

GENE E. BARTLETT, First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

Finding the Love of God.

We are for these moments to seek for the eepest meaning of the love of God in our ves. When Paul wrote to the Romans he spoke f that love in the fifth chapter and the sixth erse. "We rejoice in our sufferings . . . beause God's love has been poured into our earts."

The Assurance of Others

First, we can, surely, begin our search with onfidence knowing that others have found the ove of God in their lives. There can be no oubt about their testimony. They know God's ove, and it was profoundly real. You may hoose to believe they were deluded, but you annot doubt that they had an experience, and hat they recognized it as the love of God oured into their hearts.

Consider how often that affirmation is found i the New Testament. "God so loved the world hat He gave His only begotten son." That's he word of John. "Neither death nor life can eparate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." That's the word of aul. "We love Him because He has first loved s." That's the testimony of that little letter alled 1st John.

Need I say that it is often in our hymns? Out f our attachment to the tunes of our hymns, we ften take their words thoughtlessly. Some of he great poetry of Chritsian experience is in ur hymns. With what consistency they tell us f the love of God! "Love divine, all love excellng." That's Wesley. "The love of God is broader han the measure of mans mind. Thats Faber. Over and over our hymns affirm it.

You see, we modern folk have not really gone eep enough in our searching. We have conluded that when a man says, I believe in God, e has said enough. But he hasn't. Most men elieve in God of some kind or other. Primitive an believes in a God, but He's in rocks and ees and magic, a God to be feared. In short, he distinctive of our faith is not the belief hat God is, but what we believe Him to be. t is not the existence of God; it is the character f God which is our distinctive belief.

And so the witness is heard from all those who have been touched by Jesus Christ. They have found that the character of God is love, profound, seeking, suffering love. We begin with the assurance that others have found it so.

A Deeper Affirmation

But we do not go far without coming face to face with a challenge. In our kind of world it isn't easy to believe that God is love. If He is, why do some things happen as they do? Why is our world as it is? The fact of it is that at least two-thirds of the world's peoples live out their lives from birth to death in misery, knowing little but hunger and tyranny and pain. How can that happen in a world where God is love? Is He no longer loving or has He lost His power? For most of us it comes even closer. I shall not forget the day when a young boy walking beside me suddenly turned and asked, Why did God let my father die?

No mortal man will answer those questions to the full, but I do believe we can find a faith by which to live. Somewhere the key must lie in the confidence expressed by the Apostle Paul that not even these things, "neither height nor depth nor life nor death can separate us"—that's the word "separate" — from the love of God. A long time ago it became clear to men of faith that the love of God did not always prevent something happening, but it did promise that not even that happening could separate us from the love of God.

It would be a shallow faith that glibly insists there is no difficulty in believing in the love of God. But it is an incomplete faith that does not go beyond the challenge to a deeper affirmation that while that love may not prevent the coming of trouble, it cannot bring separation. Consider again the very setting of Paul's words with which we began, "We rejoice in our suffering . . . because God's love has been poured into our hearts."

Response and Responsibility

So, our thought moves on to come to the center of it now. How shall the timeless love of God come to us in our time? We find the love of God in two ways: by response, on the one hand, and responsibility, on the other. It is so deeply important that we see what they mean. It wasn't a minister but a psychiatrist who recently gave us the phrase, love or perish." But

he was only discovering what the gospel has been saying all the time. How can we find then the divine love?

First, it comes to those who are responsive. Most of us to be sure, don't know how to respond. A mediaeval saint, having come to a time when he needed comfort and assurance, went to a famous shrine in a cathedral in the hope that he might find his answer there. He relates that he walked around it three times hoping for an answer. Then it was as though an inner voice said, "What would you do if you had your assurance and your comfort? Do what you would do if you had it, and it will be given you." Even so, it is part of our answer. What would you do if you were sure of the love of God? Begin the day with new joy? Take up the very task you have been afraid of? Rest back in a new confidence and relaxation, believing at last that you can trust life at its center: Well, then do these things. At least for one day. Then more will be given you. No one ever said that it would be easy to come to the love of God and to let your life be caught up in it. It is too profound an experience to come so cheaply. But for one day at a time you can seek to live in response instead of resistance, opening of life instead of closing it, and God, surely will disclose Himself.

No, of course, it isn't easy. Nothing of worth really is. A friend of Elgar, the musician, illustrates this from a visit to their home. Elgar had said "A composer does not make music. It is all around him, and he takes as much as he needs." But Elgar himself revealed the discipline required to take the music that was around him. The friend tells that on one day she arrived at the home, supposedly to have tea with the Elgars, but the composer did not come out of his study. He did appear at dinner but never spoke a word. He hastily excused himself and returned to his study halfway through the dinner. Behind a locked door he remained until three o'clock the next morning. In all those hours he had written music to a single sentence of his oratorio, The Kingdom."

The love of God, like music, is all around us. But it isn't cheaply to be received. Respond as best you can in trust, in readiness to live one day at a time upon that assurance, and the rest will be given as you are ready to receive it.

But I have indicated that there is a second important key to finding the love of God. It comes to those who are not only responsive, but responsible. Here we come to another discovery of those who have been on the search before us. When you find the love of God you must become the instrument of it. You must be not only the receiver but the giver.

One of the most cherished prayers which some of us have used over the years is that of Francis of Assisi who asked that he might be an instrument of God's peace. In fact, if today you ask where you can see the love of God at work almost always you will find that some person is associated with it. It is the missionary carrying the ministry of healing and hope to people who did not even ask for his coming, but it's the neighbor who walks through the back gate to bring a moment of encouragement to someone in sorrow. It's the Quakers feeding the outcast and the homeless, uprooted by war, but it's the family who manages to send a CARE package out of their monthly income. It's Schweitzer in Africa, but it's the physician in Los Angeles who adds a special quality of caring to his practice. It is, in fact, in every person who by his life fulfills the word of yet another hymn "Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love."

And this is the paradox which some of us must see. We will not find for ourselves the love of God more fully until we are ready to take our responsibility of being the instrument of that love for someone else. Here we stand before one of the most meaningful pictures of the church. We have come for these moments in worship to revere and adore God who has first loved us. But it is for us to go out of the hour of worship ready as He directs us to be the instruments of that love wherever we are. From such a center of worship as this there can flow out into life wherever we touch it the healing and the awakening that comes by God's gift of love to the heart of another. That's what I mean by a church that is both **responsive** and **responsible.** It is to such a church that the word is fulfilled again as written to the Romans, "God's love has been poured into our hearts."

II. A More Excellent Way

We rather take it for granted that, given the chance, any man ought to better himself. We count it a part of our way of life. In fact, here in America we have developed many ways of creating the desire in people for something better, in terms of material things.

Then what of the things of the spirit? Shall we seek to better ourselves in a deeper way? We often assume that when one becomes Christian, that's it. But we have read our New Testament very lightly if we leave it there. For Paul was always speaking of finding the better way, of growing, of moving on to higher levels of Christian living.

One of those times is at the close of the twelfth chapter of I Corinthians. "I will show you a still more excellent way," he said. He has been speaking of gifts which people find in their Christian life: wisdom, faith, power to prophesy and to give utterances, the ability to distinguish between the good and the evil. You are almost tempted to say, is there anything

etter than these? Paul makes clear that there . "I will show you a still more excellent way." Then what is it? You have only to remember iat this is the closing verse of the twelfth chap-er of I Corinthians. It is the introduction to ie classic and cherished thirteenth chapter hich deals with the quality of love. Love then, hristian love, is the more excellent way, the ighest way of all, the fulfillment of the Chris-an life.

What is Christian Love?

What do we mean by Christian love? The ord as we use it in our common speech means iany things. Sometimes it refers to romantic ve on many levels from the movie magazines Elizabeth Browning's sonnets. To be sure, hristian living does bring a special quality to ie love upon which our homes are founded. e have counted this kind of love one of God's reat gifts, a part of the fulfillment of life. Roy roft caught that Christian quality when he rote the lines:

I love you
Not only for what you are,
But for what I am
When I am with you.

But this alone is not the full measure of the ve which God has given. Sometimes we roaden it out to think of friendship and the es that bind us with others of mutual interest. is always thrilling to read the stories of such iendships. Carlyle and Emerson had corre-ponded across the waters over a period of time id discovered such a kinship between them iat when they first met they could sit for a ng time in silence of perfect understanding. merson spent only a day and a night in Car-le's home on a visit to Europe. Yet, after he ft, Carlyle could write that Emerson was "the ie of all the sons of Adam who completely nderstood what I was saying and answered ith a truly human voice." Surely, there is a ft of God in the love that is friendship.

But when you have spoken of romantic love, n the one hand, and friendship, on the other, ere is still a distinctive quality yet to come. It a quality which is added particularly in the hristian understanding of love. It is distinc-vely found in the New Testament. For here is lded a quality of love which has been defined one scholar as "a steady set of the will." hristian love, in short, does not rest only upon e way we feel, but also upon what we decide. rests upon the knowledge that Christ said, new commandment I give unto you that you ve one another." In short, a Christian is one io does not wait for his sentiment to deter-ine what his attitude shall be toward another. e is not at the mercy of his feeling alone. He s determined to accept love not only as a way of feeling, but more, as a way of living. It is this which is the more excellent way.

It is deeply important for us to see more fully what this Christian love means.

The Indispensable Spirit

For one thing, it is the indispensable spirit behind all our actions. You can speak with the tongues of men and angels, you can give your body to be burned, you can have all knowledge and faith, but these are nothing if there is no love behind them.

Does this seem drastic? I think of a mother who hurried home one day from a trip when tragedy came to her son. She was faced with the fact that he had made a moral decision which threatened all the years in his life. She poured out her anguish and her distress. "I have given him everything," she said. "It has been my whole life to give him a home and an education and an opportunity." But looking at it over the years one could see she had given him everything except the one priceless ingredient. She had not had time to give herself in loving understanding to her son. And everything else became as nothing. That word of Paul is stark realism as we often find. Love is the indispensable quality in our action.

Look at that in the everyday life of a home. Most of the material things which me find in our homes could be secured elsewhere, food, shelter, and a place to rest. It isn't these external things which give a home its quality. It is the fact that these are endowed with a spirit, they are the expression of something deeper. There is love in them. The spirit in which they are done makes it possible for James Russell Lowell to write of his wife:

Blessing she is;
God made her so.
And deeds of weekday holiness
Fall from her noiseless as the snow.

Only one thing can transform household duties into "deeds of weekday holiness." It takes love to do that.

Or again, as we look at this thirteenth chapter it makes clear that the Christian quality is to love another for his sake, not ours. There is a difference, a very important difference. This Christian love says Paul, "bears all things, believes all things, endures all things." It "rejoices not when others go wrong but rejoices in the truth." Here is that special quality. It is the opposite of possessive love, for it surrounds the other person for his sake, not for ours. It is a giving and not a taking. This foreshadows the distinction that many a modern counselor would make between a love which possesses another person and one which affirms the other.

It is perhaps at this point that we honor the

love of a mother so deeply. It is its distinctive mark. God in His wisdom has made the love of a mother for a child one of the most powerful and determining factors in what that child shall become. A mature mother love is God's way of helping the child find security and reliance in all the years to come. A mother above all else bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and her children "shall rise up and call her blessed" for it. She asks no greater joy than seeing her children at last stand able and reliant, mature and responsible. That's why God gave us parents who loved, not for their sake but for ours. That's Christian love.

How Do We Possess It?

Then how do we possess it? The fact of it is, we would not want that quality of love in our lives unless we had already been touched by it. How do we come to love at all? Only as someone has first loved us. And the sum of the Christian life is in our attempting to love others as God has first loved us. And unless He had already touched our lives with that love we would not be hungering for more. There is an old principle of theology that a man does not hunger for that which he has never tasted. So it follows, if you hunger for something, it means in one sense that you have already found it. What you really want is more. So, we would not be hungering for this quality of love if somehow it had not already touched us in the gift of God in Jesus Christ.

But I would add that our constant prayer is for this kind of real Christian love within our church. It is the distinctive mark. At last it is the appeal greater than any other. To my mind there comes the memory of a church which supposedly had passed its peak many years ago. One observer has said that there were twenty reasons why that church should have died long ago. But it hasn't. To the contrary. It kept its vigor and its strength, and people travel for miles to come to it. The reason is clear. There is love there, real love that surrounds a person, accepts him and brings him into that fellowship. That quality is the mark of a really great church. God confronts us with it today. In all of these ways He has said, "I will show you a still more excellent way." May we accept it with all our hearts, so help us God.

III. Love For the Least

One of the charming stories of recent years has the intriguing title, "An Episode of Sparrows." You may wonder where the story would get such a strange title. Before the book is through, however, you will find the key to it. Two of the main characters in the book are sisters who live in an old house which represents the elegance of an era long past. One of the sisters resents the children, the seeming multitude of children who have come into the deteriorating area. The other sister, Olivia, has an interest and concern for those children though she is often not free to express it.

One day when a little girl named Lovejoy is in a need of special help, Olivia suggests that she should be the one to give a hand. As she talks to her minister about it he says, "We must trust. It isn't oldfashioned to say that God is good. Remember, not one sparrow can fall to the ground." "But," replies Olivia, "it isn't so. They fall all the time. We knock them down. That's what humans do to humans. So, don't talk to me about God." Then there was a moment of silence and she continues, "Wait, humans to humans? Is that how it works? Someone, one person at least, is meant to see the fall and care?"

The question is an interesting one. And the answer is so clearly stated in the words which Jesus included in the parable that tells of the last judgment. The King said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

On What Level is Our Love?

Let us begin by seeing that these words confront us with a question: On what level is our love? Life without love would be unendurable. The poet said it well:

> . . . . . It is
> The hate-touched soul I dread,
> The joyless heart; the unhappy
> Faces in the streets; the
> Smoldering fires of unforgiven
> Slights. These do I fear. Not
> Night, nor surging seas, nor
> Rebel winds, but hearts unlovely,
> And unloved.

But we said that these words of Christ face us with a question: On what level is our love?

First, there is that love for those who have first loved us. We would never know the meaning of love if our parents or someone had not surrounded us with its warmth. It is a charming as well as a penetrating insight which Dr. Goodspeed has caught in his autobiography when he entitles one chapter, "I Fall in Love With My Parents." That's how it begins for all. It is the awakening of life itself. That is the first level. Can't we call it responding love?

Or there is a second level in which we love those who are loveable. In the growth of life we come to offer and to ask love of another, a friend, a companion, a lifemate, or one with whom we can share the loving experiences of life. This is another stage in love's development. We can call it fulfilling love.

But then we move on to even higher levels and this is our concern today. For a third level

s where we come to love even the least. That's vhere Jesus meets us in this classic story. Here Ie speaks not of those who first loved us, for hey haven't. It is not even of those who are oveable: there is every chance that they may eem not to be so. They are known only for ne thing. They have a need. They are hungry r sick. They are naked or thirsty. They are mprisoned. They require of us a new level of ove. What shall we call it but redeeming love?

There is just one stage higher. We shall need o note it in passing. Jesus spoke of it that we night realize how high God's love could go. t is coming to love even our enemies.

How far have we grown into the stature of Christ who loved men on all levels especially the ighest. In our story today Christ has brought s almost to the top, for He is speaking of the ove for the least.

In our imagination there come in magnificent uccession men and women who have moved to hat level. The list is almost endless. Father Damien among the lepers, Kagawa in the slums of Tokyo, Schweitzer bringing medical care and he good news to the tribes of Africa. They eem to ask by their very lives: On what level s our love today?

How Can I Learn to Love Like That?

At this point in imagination I can hear an nswer to that question. It seems to lead us nto a second consideration. It, too, is caught p in a question: How can I ever learn to love ike that? That compassion and loving kindness vhich reaches out even to the least, does not lways come naturally.

The whole question is brought to focus when ve realize how much human need presses upon s these days. One modern woman has written ery frankly these words, "We are asked today o feel compassionately for everyone in the vorld . . . modern communication loads us with nore problems than the human frame can car-y." If the need is in the neighbor across the ack fence or in the apartment next door, most f us would respond immediately. But in a vorld where the need reaches around the world ow can we really love as Christ wanted us to ove?

One cannot deal with this without seeing how eally the influence of Christ has changed the vorld in which we live. How amazed someone from the ancient world would be if he ould see all the works of compassion which ve take for granted! We have written a concern for the least into our very way of life. The homeless and the needy are offered a helping hand. It is, indeed, the legacy of Jesus Christ whose words, "Inasmuch as ye have done unto one of the least of these" have echoed n the hearts of some men in every generation. nd yet there is so much more to do. The very essence of our hope today is that our lives may be offered to Christ anew that He may use them in the ministry He would bring to needy souls.

How can you learn to love like that? You ask. Surely, it means beginning with the next step at hand, and God will show us the way. Only God's love is perfect. The mark of ours must be that it is growing. To grow means several things.

It may mean looking at your everyday relationships. Christ said that in every person we would see Him. The Quakers have a quaint way of saying it. "Go about the earth greeting that of God which is in every man." Can you see what a revolution that can mean if this spirit could be carried into the neighborhoods of this city, into the homes represented here, into the offices and the classrooms. I have seen revolutions brought about by people who sought to live on the higher levels of love in all of their relationships. Try living by love tomorrow, seeing Christ in every person, and see what difference it makes.

It may open, on the other hand, some special service that you will be called to render. Years ago during the war a Japanese American military unit was located in one of our neighboring states. These were tense days. The war was on. People had suspicions and often apprehensions. But one farmer saw the boys from that camp come to town and have no place to go. On an impulse he invited two of them to his farm home for a Sunday. They came. They sent gifts in appreciation of his hospitality. It was the beginning of something which this farmer, named Fred, had not bargained for. They found themselves inviting large groups of soldiers from the nearby camp. As the boys went away to the various war fronts they started to correspond. And so it went on through the years of the war. When those young soldiers married and started their families, they remembered the kindness of Fred and his wife. There was one way they could express their thanks. They could name a son after him. And at last count there were some four thousand Japanese American babies bearing the name of Fred in honor of one man who had learned to live in love.

But suppose it doesn't come for you like that. Is there nothing you can do? And here one gratefully turns to the meaning of his church. Perhaps I cannot go to bring ministry to the Hungarian refugees abroad, or to the people of Africa struggling to win their status in our world, or to a desolate Japanese fishing village. But I am part of a great fellowship of love and by my giving and my serving in that fellowship I can seek to grow in the way of love. So can everyone of us here. The church is, indeed, the great channel of service from which there

can — deeper than that there must — flow forth a great healing stream of love in a world where two-thirds of our people know misery and poverty beyond our telling. That's how you learn to love by taking the opportunity that is nearest at hand. We have the very word of Christ Himself that He will lead us on to see the next step.

The Way of Excellence

JOHN W. MEISTER, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

And I will show you a still more excellent way.—I Corinthians 12:31

The phrase is St. Paul's. He said, "I will show you a still more excellent way." He then proceeded to write the well-known and beautiful "Thirteenth Chapter": "If I speak in the tongues of men and angels but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a changing cymbal." With thirteen such perfectly chiseled sentences he gives form and substance to the reality of love. Clearly this is the way of excellence: the way of love.

Paul is not alone in his estimate of the excellence of love. Long years before, a prophet by the name of Isaiah and another by the name of Hosea proclaimed that God is more like suffering, humiliating love than he is like anything else. Throughout the Old Testament — from the lips of Moses and the Psalmists and the prophets — we hear the phrase, "the steadfast love of God." It comes again and again, like the deep, dulcet tones of a carillon and every time it comes it strikes up a new melody to drift down through the years. And, of course, no one so exalted love as John of the New Testament who said, "God is love."

In such a recital we ought not forget our Lord's testimony. When someone asked him to define the most important law he answered, "Love God with all your heart, and all your soul and all your strength and all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself." In one word, "Love!" This is the sum of the Commandments.

But "love" is a word of many meanings. It stands for one thing in a studio at Hollywood and for another thing in a hotel at Niagara Falls and for still another thing in a cottage where two people celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary. Love spells "greed" when a miser hoards his money; it spells "patriotism" when a soldier serves his country; and it spells "devotion" when a martyr dies for his convictions. The scholar "loves" knowledge; the artist "loves" beauty; the Christian "loves" God.

When the Scriptures talk about "love" as the way of excellence, what do the several spokesmen mean? What is the nature of this love? And how does it work in real life?

As regards the nature of Biblical love we ought to observe this: Love as presented in the New Testament begins with God. It has something to do with him. As someone has put it, "To say that 'God is love' does not mean that love is a good idea but that the universe is rooted and grounded in love, is so constructed as to reveal and uphold love, and will repulse and destroy everything and everyone that is against love."

No one makes this clearer than does John. In one of his letters he says, "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Notice that he does not say "We love God because he first loved us," but that "we love because he first loved us." In other words, love as an activity —without reference to the object—derives from God. This same man applies this principle in a most practical manner: "Let us love one another for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love . . . No man has ever seen God; (but) if we love one another, God abides in us." (See 1 John 4).

But what kind of love is this which God has manifested toward us? Sometimes we speak about divine love as though God were a "vast, affectionate mush of divinity up there somewhere." At other times we speak of it as though divine love were simply some part of ultimate principle or "law" at work in the world.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. God has shown his love supremely in one place: in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. As John put it, "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). Or as the same truth appears in the Gospel: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." (John 3:16).

This is God's love: the undeserved grace of God which we have received in Jesus Christ. It is the undeserved goodness we have received in Christ. It is the undeserved graciousness of God which has been revealed in Christ. This is God's love: That he humbled himself and suffered as a man—suffered death upon the cross —that we be shown the secret of the way the world operates. If we would be victor we must first become victim; if we would know the resurrection our self must first be crucified; if we would live abundantly we must live for the sake of others.

As Jesus put it: Hear the lesson from a grain of wheat: if it lives alone it perishes; but if it falls into the earth and dies it bears much fruit

II

So much for the nature of the way of excellence. It is the way which has its beginning in God's character. What can we say about the way such loves shows itself in our life?

The first thing I want to say is this: We cannot return this love to God. This emptying of the Creator to win us to himself is an act the creature cannot return. Nothing could be more absurd or ludicrous than to suggest that a mortal could "love God as God has loved us." We cannot "give ourself" in such an unmerited or undeserved way, if only because God deserves whatever good or devotion we render him.

If we cannot return God's love, what can we do? We can respond to it. We can respond to God's love by loving our fellow creatures in the same way God first loved us: by giving freely of ourselves to people who have no claim upon us, who in no sense "deserve" us and who will probably only crucify us.

It is at this point that Paul's thirteenth chapter seems to me to be most helpful. He spells out what this sort of response means in real life. The middle paragraph of this chapter is really a definition of this sort of love. I hope we shall all read this chapter, not only once and not just today but at least once a week as long as we live. When we do we shall find that such love is not something to talk about but something to live, to do, to practice. In the original Greek we do not find a single descriptive adjective in the entire paragraph. Paul uses verbs — the words of action — for love is dynamic and active.

We get a better "feel" of the action-nature of love in the King James translation than we do in the modern Revised Standard Version. Perhaps you recall some of these characteristics of the love that is the way of excellence: Love suffers long and is kind; Love does not envy, does not boast, and is not puffed up; Love does not insist on its own way; Love does not seek what belongs to itself; Love is not easily provoked; Love thinks no evil; Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but in what is true; Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things.

In real life we normally see this sort of love manifested in the parent for the child more forcibly and vividly than anywhere else. We hear a lot about "brother love" but in normal situations brother-love cannot touch father-love or mother-love. Jesus recognized this fact in his parable of the prodigal son: the two brothers showed virtually none of this divine love whereas the father becomes a symbol of God's own love.

But there is only one place where this love has ever been perfectly manifest — on the cross outside the city gates of Jerusalem. There in human flesh we behold this kind of love: suffering long, hoping all things and enduring all things. There the Perfect Lover is freely and completely giving himself for the unworthy, the undeserving and the ungrateful. And there we find the heart of God revealed.

This is love, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. This is the only proper response — we love because he first loved us. This is the way of excellence.

Perhaps you recall the testimony of Isaac Watts:

> When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died
> My richest gain I count but loss
> And pour contempt on all my pride.
>
> Were the whole realm of nature mine
> That were a present far too small
> Love so amazing, so divine
> Demands my soul, my life, my all.

That discovery is the first step on the way of excellence.

The Mark of a Christian

EVERETT W. PALMER, First Methodist Church, Glendale, California

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you . . . By this all men will know that ye are my disciples . . .
John 13:34, 35

We recognize a policeman or a nurse by their uniform. People say they can identify a Californian or a Texan just by listening. We identify a nation by its flag. We know the make and year of a car by the shape of its grill, the lines of its chassis.

But what is the mark of a Christian? Is it our denomination, the church to which may belong? Is it our theology, the creed to which we may give assent? Is it the interpretation we give to the Scripture? Is it our general viewpoint, whether that of a liberal or conservative?

Our Lord gives us the answer we need to remember. This, he says, is the all-decisive standard for Christians: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you . . . by this all men will know that you are my disciples . . ."

So far as Jesus Christ is concerned, love is the test. All else is secondary. Lacking love, nothing else matters.

I

Let us begin by asking, what is Christian love? What did our Lord mean when He said, "Love one another"?

"Love" is a little word. However, it can mean many things. Its range of meaning is so wide it causes contradiction and confusion.

On one hand, see what Christian love is not. Someone has defined love by saying, "Life is one thing after another. Love is two fool things after each other . . . Love is the feeling you feel when you feel you are going to feel a feeling you never felt before." This is not the kind of love Jesus had in mind.

There is a time and place, of course, for that sweet agony about which Johnnie Ray has shed such profitable tears. This world would be a dull place without that strange feeling which at Spring prompts the cloddish soul of man to consider what his lady fair had decided long before Christmas. But exciting and rewarding, thrilling and delectable as may be that mysterious affinity which develops between man and woman, Christian love is more than that.

Also, this should be plainly stated: Christian love is not soft and sissy. It is not the practice of weaklings and cowards. It is not the refuge of the defeated, innocuous and ineffectual. This misconception is so widespread I am always reluctant to use the word "love" in a sermon or public prayer without opportunity to cleanse it, so to speak.

Christian love is not symbolized by moonlight and roses. It is not effeminate and ineffectual.

Now, turn from the negative to the positive. What is Christian love? Our text suggests the answer. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you . . ." We are to love as Christ loved. And what is the love we see in Jesus Christ?

1. It is the most manly of all virtues. Some would imagine such traits as aggressiveness, initiative, persistence, and courage to be the supremely virile virtues. But they are child's play compared to the requirements of Christian love as demonstrated by Jesus Christ.

No one has suffered worse ingratitude and injustice, but full to the end He maintained an indomitable good will. He was unselfish and helpful in every relationship, whether with friend or foe. Whenever self-pity, resentment or revenue rose up like giants within Him, He conquered them. Even on His Cross He mastered them. There He could say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This He could say of the soldiers who drove the nails, of Pilate who could have spared Him, of the priests and others in high places who plotted against Him, of the crowd who mocked Him, of His friends who deserted Him, and of Judas who betrayed Him.

No one has given so much to man and received so little in return of earthly reward, but full to the end He gave Himself to mankind without stint. He did not serve His own comfort, nor seek his own profit. He put everything He had into the assignment given Him. He served it with devotion and passion no money could hire, no earthly potentate command. Nothing on earth could stop Him — neither threats or persecution, nor perils, nor torture, nor death. Why? Love is the answer, love He had for God and man.

Let anyone trace the footprints of Jesus Christ from His carpenter shop in Nazareth till at last he stands before a Cross on a gaunt, ugly hill. Let him look into the face of the Man hanging there. Then let him try to say Christian love is soft and sissy. He will know it to be the most demanding of all disciplines, the most rigorous of all endeavors, the most manly of all virtues.

2. It is is the crown of all virtues. We pay special tribute, for instance, to what we consider the virtues of success. We say of a man: "He has drive; he's a hustler, a go-togetter, a fighter." Perhaps we add, "He's smart." We may think we have awarded the highest of compliments. But unless such traits are brought under the rule of Christ-like love they bring in the end, not success but worst failure. They twist his soul into ugliness. They make his life sterile as a desert. They turn his powers into tools for self-destruction. They make him a menace to others, a beast of prey. No virtue long remains a virtue apart from the control of Christian love.

Hence, those who have concern to practice such love are not the defeated running for refuge nor naive dreamers coasting in a pretty blue cloud. Let anyone trace the influence of Jesus Christ in human affairs for the past nineteen hundred years. Let him look at the harvest in all things good that blesses mankind whenever and wherever people have lived obedient to the love seen in Him. Then let him say Christian love is the refuge of the defeated, innocuous, and ineffectual. He will know it as the supreme essential, the crown of all the virtues.

What is Christian love? It is greater than the goddess served by disc jockies. It is not evidence of weakness or cowardice. It is the most manly of all virtues, the crown of all virtues. It is love as demonstrated by Jesus Christ. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you . . . By this all men will know that you are my disciples . . ."

II

Having considered the meaning of Christian love, turn now to think of our need for it. All the world yearns for it, hungers and thrists for it.

Every person needs it. Each of us wants un

derstanding, sympathy, compassion. We want to be measured by eyes that look beyond our faults and failures to see the good we intended. We want forgiveness and another chance. We want acceptance, and more than that, we want to be "wanted." We want the interior support which comes of knowing we are important to others; that they believe in us, expect the best of us, care for us. In short, as nothing else, we need and want Christian love. Without it, life is an emptiness too heavy to bear, a loneliness worse than death.

Mrs. Carl Doss, mother of the famous international, interracial family of twelve adopted children ,tells of one baby girl assigned to them. She was sickly, a bundle of scrawny flesh and bones, a fast-growing tumor bulged out from her forehead. Nobody wanted her. She was expected to die. But once in a home where she was wanted, where love was in the hands that touched her and in the voices that spoke to her, she began to get well. Radium treatment removed the tumor, love lifted her into life.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas, parents of far-famed newscaster, traveler, lecturer and author, Lowell Thomas, were once members of a church I served. One night I chanced to be in their home when Lowell called them long distance. He was concerned about his mother, then in her last illness. But also he talked with his father about the network broadcast he had just completed. He was world-famous, rich, successful, foremost in his profession. But he was hungry for such word of appreciation and encouragement which his father, a retired, small-town doctor, might say to him.

Everyone from the least to the greatest needs Christian love, needs it more than all else.

Every church needs it. Nothing hurts a church more, smothers out its life more quickly than lack of love among its membership.

A church is useful only as it has strength. It has strength only as it has unity. It has unity only as the individual members love one another as Christ has loved them.

We must love one another enough to be patient with each other's weakness and forgiving of each other's faults. We must love one another enough to recognize and appreciate each other's virtues, concentrating on our personal faults and mending them before looking for flaws in our brothers.

Beloved, for Christ's sake, let us love each other. May the outside world have reason to say of us, "Behold, how they love each other. Why, they act like Christians."

Every church needs the healing, cleansing, unifying, redeeming power of Christian love; needs it more than all else.

And the world needs it. More than more jet bombers, guided missiles and H-Bombs, mankind needs more the love of Jesus Christ. Thomas Dooley, a young lieutenant in the Navy Medical Corps, in a recent book entitled **Deliver Us From Evil**, tells of his experiences in a refugee camp in turbulent, tragic North Viet Nam. He with his unit was assigned to serve more than half a million wretched, sick and often horribly maimed people fleeing from the Communists in hopes of finding safety and freedom. Communist propaganda had poisoned their minds against America and Americans. They came into the refugee camp sullen and fearful; coming only because death was the only other choice remaining.

Lt. Dooley tells of being awakened in the night again and again by his mate stumbling into his tent saying, "Better get moving, Doc . . . we've got another batch — a thousand more." And they would be like all the rest — filthy, starving, diseased, maimed, frightened, suffering humanity.

He and the men working with him in that naval medical unit sought to demonstrate to these people real Americanism, the democracy that is the strong, sharing in a spirit of understanding and compassion with those who are weak and perishing.

After eight months of that duty, he was exhausted. He had dropped in weight from one hundred eighty to a scant one hundred twenty. He was given his orders to come home.

On his way back from that tour of duty he was held over for a time at Hickam Field, Hawaii. A young ensign there was assigned to look after him. It wasn't long before Dooley knew that the young ensign thoroughly disapproved of him. When pressed to give his reason, the young ensign said, "Well, I can't go for this hogwash you're handing out . . . All this love and altruism and better understanding among people. That's not the Navy's job. We've got a military responsibility in this cockeyed world. Big responsibilities . . . That's what we're trained for. Love and kindness and slobbering over people is a job for preachers and old women."

Some time later two dozen young lads came through Hickam wearing the Vietnamese Air Force uniform. They were on their way to Texas for advanced training. They had been among the thousands of young men whom the Communists in North Viet Nam had tortured and mutilated. Some of them still showed on their faces ugly scars and there were those whose ears had been torn off. They had found their way into that refugee camp where Lt. Dooley and his colleagues had worked in Christian mercy. They had been among the tens of thousands treated and cared for.

Lt. Dooley, of course, did not recognize them. But they recognized him. They ran to him, sur-

rounding him, throwing their arms about him, tears coursing down their cheeks, calling out his name excitedly. A crowd of curious bystanders gathered about; among them, in the front row, the crusty young ensign. Dooley thought that was a good time to explain a few matters. He told the assembled crowd of the refugee camp, of these lads and thousands of others like them, who had come mutilated and maimed in their flight for freedom, who had come poisoned against America by Communist propaganda. He told of how he, with a small Navy medical unit, tried to serve them, to show them the real heart of democracy.

As he talked the crowd noticed, of course, the ugly scars and the torn ears of the lads in the Vietnamese Air Force uniform. But even more, they noticed their shining eyes and their most evident faith in and devotion for everything American represented by Lt. Dooley. That crowd of bystanders learned what love can do. And, says Lt. Dooley, the most penitent of all converts was the one-time crusty young ensign.

Dooley closes his book by saying that in respect of international relations, we are all inclined at first to be like the crusty young ensign. But he adds, we need only to glimpse the truth and the scales will fall from our eyes . . . we lose our inhibitions and we are no longer afraid to speak of love, compassion, generosity. We know that what Christ said in the three words of His greatest commandment, "Love one another," is beyond all else mankind's way to healing and hope in this twentieth century.

Who is a Christian? "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you . . . By this all men will know that you are my disciples . . ."

What Is Love?

CHARLES ROSS HODGES, The Pilgrim Church, New Bedford, Massachusetts

Simon, ... lovest thou me more than these? . . . Feed my lambs.
John 21:15

Poor Peter! He felt sadly unappreciated, for Jesus had asked him, not once but three times, this question, "Lovest thou me?" He felt very much as he had on that other occasion when, for all his good intensions, he had been rebuked with the stinging words, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

At this time, Peter is still haunted by that nagging sense of guilt which had come upon him that terrible morning when the crowning of the cock had revealed his own soul to his eyes. Now Jesus is repeatedly asking him this question. Yet why should not the question be repeated? For Peter is himself refusing a straightforward reply. His reply, "Lord thou knowest that I love thee," uses, each time, a different and weaker verb than that in the question Jesus asks him. Jesus is asking ,in effect, "Peter, do I have your all-out loyalty?"; Peter is replying, "Lord, you know that I am well-disposed to ward you."

Why the difference in verbs? Is Peter too modest to make the claim that he is one of the wholly loyal? Is he, perhaps, still too conscious of his previous failure to commit himself?

I

In any case, there is surely a very real distinction here. What is love?

Out of experience and observation, without a doubt, most of us can garner several instances of things which masquerade as love, but which fall short of being what we mean by the word in a Christian sense. One of these which comes to mind at once is sentimental possessiveness. I recall, from a community in which I once lived, a woman who "loved" small children. To all appearances, she was a most loving personality —until she was seen dealing with slightly older children. These children were beginning to have ideas of their own. She could no longer push them around and satisfy her own ego at their expense. As soon as children, in the course of their normal development, began to be personalities with purposes of their own ,they ceased, for her ,to be "little darlings," and became "brats" and "juvenile delinquents." Thus ensued much puzzled hurt for her former proteges who suddenly found themselves rejected, for no reason which they could understand.

This sentimental possessiveness is one of the things which masquerades as love. It is far from the real thing, because it is indulged, not for the sake of the other person, but for one's own sentimental pleasure.

Another thing which masquerades as love is the state of being merely "well-disposed" toward another. That is essentially what the verb means which Peter uses in his replies to Jesus. "Good inclinations" are not enough, because so often they are exactly what the name implies. We incline this way, we incline that way, according to the whim or the convenience of the moment.

The libraries are full of "Lives" of Christ, but the world is far from full of Christlike lives! It is one thing to be well-disposed toward Christ and his kingdom; it is something else again to be completely loyal to him in every aspect and relationship of life.

Most ministers, frankly, grow at least a little tired of hearing people say, "I believe in the Church, but . . . " If a man repeatedly told me that he believed in an elevator, but just as consistently refused to set foot upon it, should I be wrong in doubting his sincerity?

II

What is love? Is it not one of those words which we cannot define, but which, like electricity, is well enough known by its effects?

Paul describes it in that familiar passage, that great poem of Christian love, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. As you re-read that chapter, you will notice that there is nothing said there about subjective states. There is no sentimentality, no "peace of mind" preaching. Paul's picture of love is direct and objective; it is marked by its outward effects rather than by inner and pleasurable states. "Love" — Paul uses the same word here which Jesus uses in the questions to Peter — shows itself in certain very concrete ways. It "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own . . . " Love shows itself, in short, in a reverent regard for the personality of Christ, and, as an inevitable mark of that regard, in a similar regard for human personalities. "Feed my lambs . . . . Feed my sheep."

You will note, also, that while this chapter of First Corinthians is in truth a great poem of love, it is not drawn out of a cloudy realm of abstractions. We cannot snatch it out of its setting in the whole letter — a setting made up of "the cussedness of saints," as Arthur Hewitt calls it. It is a part of the whole discussion of the personal and community problems, the quabbles and immoralities, of the Corinthians.

Love is not just a noble sentiment; it is an active principle, which rightly works itself out in concrete, everyday situations — or else it is nothing at all worth talking about.

Love, moreover, seems to be the only positive weapon in God's earthly armory. He has made, so far as we can see, no other provision for bringing in his kingdom.

When the British first tried to compute the height of the mountain now known as Everest, they were brought to a halt by the fact that neither Tibet nor Nepal would admit Europeans to their borders. They finally conquered the problem by training natives of the two countries in the use of simple instruments and in the reporting of observations. Many of these natives never returned; but, bit by bit, valuable data were pieced together.

In dealing with the world of men, God seems to have had to resort to somewhat the same method. Jesus expressed it in the parable of the landlord who sent servant after servant to collect the ground rent, only to have all rejected and mistreated; and who, as a last resort, sent his only son, only to have him put to death. God himself was barred from the world of human affairs. Men insisted on worshipping little corners of God's personality — all that they could see — and deluding themselves that this little corner was God. They worshipped a God of vengeance. They worshipped a God who gave pleasures, but made no demands. Thus are similar small facets of the reality of God worshipped even today, and, as James K. Kennedy says, "to desire God without giving up self is idolatry."

God sent his servants the prophets, men with their feet on the same ground, their roots deep in the same culture, as those to whom they were sent. Like those sent into Tibet and Nepal, "many never returned." Yet gradually, bit by bit, the situation was helped. Finally, God sent his own Son, and he, too, was rejected, with even greater violence.

So, in the long, long cycle of history, the responsibility comes back again to the "natives." Yes, well I know that all of us in the churches are far from being adequate exemplifications of God's love. We are, however, the **only** workmen God has in this province. His love has to flow through these limited channels, or it will not flow. So, you see, your inadequacy and mine is no exemption for us. "I'm not good enough" means, as an excuse, exactly nothing. Every one now at work in the churches and in the wider sweep of God's kingdom could rightly say exactly the same thing.

In fact, our very inadequacy may give us the better opportunity to draw close to human need. In Thornton Wilder's "The Angel that Troubled the Waters," the crippled physician waits with others beside the pool of healing, for the troubling of the waters; but when the moment comes, he is bidden to draw back. He protests to the angel: "Must I drag my shame, prince and singer, all my days more bowed than my neighbor?" The angel stands a moment in silence and then replies, "Without your wound, where would your power be? . . . The very angels themselves cannot persuade the wretched and blundering children of earth as can one human being broken on the wheels of living. In love's service, only the wounded soldiers can serve. Draw back."

III

When are we going to begin making full use of the power of love in remaking this sad world?

A missionary among the Indians of Arizona helped with the burial of an Indian woman, and consoled her family. The bereaved husband asked, "Why do you do this? Other white men are occupied in making money." The mission-

ary told in simple language the story of Jesus, and received in response this penetrating question, "How long have your people known this? Why have you not told us before?"

We can, of course, think of many reasons for our slowness in carrying the story. We are human, limited in our outlook. We have had to concentrate on one little area of need at a time. Then too, let's face it, there is a great deal of inertia in the machinery. We have to stop for breath now and then. We have been, as the Indian ,implied, too occupied with our own affairs.

But Christian love is, after all — is it not — the one thing which makes a person truly human, which makes us more than just a higher and shrewder form of animal. And Christian love, by its very definition, cannot express itself adequately either in sentimentality or in mild friendliness. It can be expressed only in an intense concern for the highest welfare of the other person.

"Why have you not told us before?" What a sting there is in that astringent question as we lay it upon our minds and hearts!

Love, in the Christian sense, is never a pianissimo lulling us to peace of mind; it is a bugle call to action. Christianity is not a plane which takes us to heaven without intermediate stops; rather, it is a bus which gets there with stops at every little crossroads of human life. It is that way because the intermediate territory is important. Concern for human need, here and now, is an indispensable prerequisite to peace of mind, either here or hereafter.

The world looks up to the churches, and, far oftener than we may think, asks the Indian's pathetic and heart-searching question, "Why have you not told us before?" Not just the African and the Indian in the recognized mission field. It may be a youthful criminal who began his career as a juvenile delinquent under the shadow of a church to which he was a stranger, who asks the question, "Why have you not told us before?"

"Simon, ... lovest thou me? . . . . Feed my lambs."

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BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING - - -

(Continued from Page 2)

This admirable volume deals with the meanings and relevance of such objects as God, man, sin, the Bible, prayer, the church and grace, and illustrates the fundamental importance of beliefs. (Westminster Press, 142 pp., $2.50).

The Book of Revelation by Thomas S. Kepler is a helpful and substantial introduction and verse-by-verse commentary. Designed for laymen ,the book ought also to be of value to pastors who preach on Revelation and to church school interpreters. The book, unlike many on the subject, seems to answer more questions than it raises, and furthermore gives considerable insights regarding present-day values of Revelation. (Oxford University Press, 232 pp., $4.50.)

Two new volumes have been added to the Daily Study Bible Series by William Barclay, eminent Scottish expositor. Both of these volumes, **The Gospel of Luke** and **The Letters to the Corinthians,** are, like the earlier volumes on Mark and Acts, written in an engaging manner and squeeze from the individual verses a homiletic freshness that is seldom equaled. The Corinthian volume is especially praiseworthy. (Westminster Press, 300 pp., and $2.50 each.)

50 Children's Sermons by Graham R. Hodges possesses a strightly and animated character which gives the various stories an appeal for both adults and children. Some readers may wish that the stories had a greater scriptural basis, although ministers and teachers can readily add this dimension. (Abingdon Press, 95 pp., $1.75.)

George M. Lamsa's translation of **The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts** is based on the Peshitta, the authorized Bible of the Eastern church, and as such offers many opportunities for contrast and comparison. Even a casual study shows the many differences between the Aramic and Greek Bibles. This translation is written with clarity and with vigor of expression. (A. J. Holman Co., 1264 pp., $12.50.)

Spiritual Renewal through Personal Groups, edited by John L. Casteel, is an inspiring, stimulating examination of small groups of persons who have come together for individual and church prayer and meditation. Nine contributors interpret the organization, disciplines, and achievements of their groups. **Pulpit Preaching** readers will be especially interested in the story by John W. Meister of the way in which numerous prayer groups have transformed the church he serves. (Association Press, 220 pp., $3.50.)

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, written by a co-founder of AA, tells of the history, meaning and purposes of the organiatizon, the validity of which is presented through many remarkable stories and anecdotes. Most preachers will derive considerable benefit through a better understanding of the work of this group, its principles and activities. (Harper & Brothers, 335 pp., $4.)

Worth Quoting

E. PAUL HOVEY, The Federated Churches, Lewiston, Idaho

D. T. Niles tells of a service being held in a Cathedral in Norway. Bishop Bergraav was preaching. Worshippers had noticed that the ceiling was low in proportion to the rest of the building. During the sermon Bishop Bergraav told the congregation that the ceiling which they saw was not the true ceiling. It was the working floor for artists who were painting the life of our Lord on the true ceiling. Some day the working floor would be taken down and then they would see what the artists had been doing.

As we look up and try to see what God is doing in our world, we are tempted to feel disappointed. We look for soaring arches, delicate stone work, and a height that reminds us of infinity. But one day our working floor will be taken away and then we will see what the Great Artist has been doing.

* * *

This world has no use for a religion that avoids the hot spots or evades the tough issues. Christ was expendable. "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

In a day when crisis is piled upon crisis, there must be, if we would serve and help to save the world, a church, bearing the label of Christ, which will help to carry the burden of imminent tragedy . . . .

The church is the love of God in Christ laying such hold on the lives of men that they become different from the world . . . Once called the people who "held the world together," the church is not now maintaining its influence.

— Allan Knight Chalmers in **That Revolutionary—Christ** (Scribner)

* * *

How do people make up their minds? Clyde W. Hart, director of the National Opinion Research Center, who has taught or investigated public opinion for 35 years, gives this answer: "I don't think anybody's mind is very often completely made up for him. On the other hand, I don't think anybody completely makes up his own mind. People are the most important influence in forming your opinion — your friends or those you admire to whom you go for advice.—**Newsweek.**

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Saying — but not saying — grace.

In New Jersey, silence is golden.

For the past 30 years, students at the two public schools in Edgewater Park have recited a simple and non-compulsory grace before lunch.

Last March, trouble began. At a parent's request, the school board ordered the custom discontinued, changed its mind when other parents protested and, finally, decided to ask Attorney General Grover G. Richman, Jr., for advice.

Last week Richman ruled that the recitation of grace is a "religious exercise" and illegal, but that children could observe a period of silence before lunch provided they understood that grace was not to be offered (silently) at that time.

Mrs. Mildred Magowan, supervising principal of the two schools, snapped 'Ridiculous,' then posed a pertinent question about legal silence: "How can you ask children for a moment of silence without telling them why you are asking for it?"—**Newsweek.**

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Your education has been partially wasted if it has not taught you to stand on your own feet and make a decision. During the last war, five destroyers were steaming along through a Pacific fog. The four following ships were depending on the lead ship for bearings, and all followed the leader onto the rocks. The Naval Court did not excuse the ships for following their leader. It held that they should have taken their own bearings now and then.

The commanders . . . made the mistake of letting somebody else do their thinking for them. Don't make that mistake. Learn to evaluate.—Kenneth R. Miller.

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A young man returning from the last war wrote in his diary three vows which he wanted to serve as guides for his life as he came home. The first was this: To maintain steadfastly and at all costs his spiritual disciplines. Second, to keep alive whatever creative powers God had given him. Third, to keep bitterness and resentment out of his life.

A decade later, having earned fame in his particular calling, he says, I immediately made this discovery. If I kept my first vow I had no trouble with the other two. If I maintained through the exercise of spiritual disciplines touch with God I had little trouble with the other aims of my life. Come to your world . . . with God as the center of your faith, and the problems you shall face along the way will have a tendency to resolve themselves. As a noted writer . . . said, "Religion is the first thing and the last in a man's life, and until a man finds God he begins at no beginning and works to no end."—W. Ralph Ward, Jr.

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Responsibility is a heavy burden to bear, and

the man without spiritual resources can hardly carry it. That best-selling novel, **From Here to Eternity**, illustrated it. Many men in the peacetime army were bitter and critical, and they counted the days until their enlistment was ended and they could be free men again. But when the time came and they wandered about rootless for a time, it suddenly dawned on them that they must now provide for themselves so much which they had accepted from the army without thought. They would have to find a job, a place to live, buy clothes and food, and make a hundred new decisions. As a result, most of them went back and re-enlisted, for they had been out of civilian life too long.

—Gerald Kennedy in **The Christian and His America** (Harper(

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In 1831, Disraeli, traveling in Egypt, met Mehemet Ali, a rascal who had made himself master of the country. He was toying with the idea of establishing a parliamentary form of government, and asked Disraeli for his comments. The British statesman took a dim view of the idea and pointed out a number of difficulties in the way. But at the next meeting the Pasha beamed as he gave his solution to the problem. "God is great!" he began. "You are a wise man. Allah! Kerim, but you spit pearls. Nevertheless, I will have a parliament, and I will have as many parliaments as the King of England himself. See here!" He flourished two lists of names. "Here are my parliaments; but I have made up my mind, to prevent inconvenience, to elect them myself." Many a man wishes he might escape the inconveniences of democracy by some superman tactic.

—Gerald Kennedy.

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The Palace at Versailles is a public place now, as any visitor to France finds if he wants to see this home of ancient royalty. But before the Revolution, it was even more available to the public, for the kings had lived without much privacy. It was not unusual for people to roam about the gardens and enter some of the public rooms. Then there came word that a large mob was on its way from Paris, threatening the destruction of the palace and death to the royal family. The guards tried frantically to close the gates but they were rusted, a hundred years of weather having practically soldered them open. Which is a parable! Men can so leave their lives open to every passing climate, that they no longer have left anything inviolable.

This is our modern danger. If a man doubts it, let him remember the things which shocked him but no longer so much as raise a passing question. Or let him look at the horrible things this generation has accepted which were once regarded as unforgivable atrocities by civilized people. Hitler may be dead, and the evil called communism may be deplored, but the democracies will do well to consider how much these viruses of the spirit have infected us.

—Gerald Kennedy.

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The men of old when they wished their virtues to shine throughout the land, first had to govern their states well. To govern their states well, they first had to establish harmony in their families. To establish harmony in their families, they first had to discipline themselves. To discipline themselves, they first had to set their minds in order. To set their minds in order, they first had to make their purpose sincere. To make their purpose sincere, they first had to extend their knowledge to the utmost. Such knowledge is acquired through a careful investigation of things. For with things investigated knowledge becomes complete. With knowledge complete the purpose becomes sincere. With the purpose sincere the mind is set in order. With the mind set in order there is real self-discipline. With real self-discipline the family achieves harmony. With harmony in the family the state becomes well-governed. With the state well-governed there is peace throughout the land.—J. Martin Klotsche.

* * *

Most of our problems in the world have a moral base. The martyr has an appreciation of the real and is the possessor of great values. Arnold J. Toynbee gives emphasis to goodness as an essential to greatness in these words: "The accomplishments of great saints are more important than the attainments of scientists and statesmen."

If one views the future and dreams the dreams of man's achievement of greatness, he would do well to consider the statement of E. M. Marshall in **A Scientist's Prediction:** "The late Dr Charles Steinmetz, one of the world's great scientists, was once asked what line of research would see the greatest ultimate development. He replied: 'The greatest discoveries will be made along spiritual lines. Some day people will learn that material things do not bring happiness and are of little use in making men and women creative and powerful. Then the scientists of the world will turn their laboratories to the study of God and prayer. When that day comes, the world will see more advancement in one generation than it has in the last four.'"

If you would be great, exercise your innate capacity to create. Know that the main highway of life is the upward climb, forever motivated by the spirit of the martyr. In moments of triumph be humble, and in moments of despair defy the immediate, and continue the unending search for truth.

I hope the questions I now ask you will burn emselves into your memories. Would you be eat? Are the people with whom you live and sociate glad you are alive, and will they miss ou when you are gone?—Charles L. Anspach.

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Greatness has no frontiers and no geograph-al dimensions . . . Greatness is the perpetual efiance of the immediate and an unending arch for the universal element in man.

—Frederic Mayer.

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Y DEBT TO NOVELISTS - - -

(Continued from Page 2)

riters did not stamp their characters with a ord or pigeonhole them in some neat com-artment of their minds. They did not label em from outside as "radical" or "criminal" or oreigner." Every person in the plot was a nique act of creation, made up of many facets. Most of us cannot truly like or understand eople who seem to be quite dissimilar to ; they awaken old tribal instincts, and inspire to fear or anger or contempt. But the crea-ve author calls every man his brother. He alizes that he himself is potentially a hero nd a villain and a dupe. And he reasons, "I n a human being, and therefore nothing hu-an is alien to me."

By empathy these novelists maneuvered them-lves inside sinners. They helped me to get side them too. In those inner recesses I saw e deep motivations, the haughty rebellions, e underlying hostilities, the hidden hungers hich made the sinner a sinner. As I lingered thoughtfully within him, I saw myself. I saw my naked soul, and it was not pleasant to behold. Such catharsis I do not experience while reading theology. Theologians give me sermon outlines, but they do not always give me life.

But I owe a further debt to the novelists. They proved to me how empty life becomes without a redeeming grace. How could writers of the past century turn out so many best sellers, yet miss so frequently the Light of the Ages? Look again at these novels. Not many strong heroes and heroines walk through these pages. Futility lingered throughout the many plots. Few characters in these books found meaning in their lives. Disillusionment had a merry reign.

Like Galsworthy in the Forsythe series, depicting the degeneration and decline of a bourgeois family, these writers could dissect a man and bring him to ruin, but were inept in showing him struggling up the straight and narrow. James Farrell took us with him when he painted Studs Lonigan on the way to hell, but later when he wrote the Danny O'Neill series about a lad who lifted himself above the Chicago slums, he wrote so poorly that we left the party before it reached the Pearly Gates. When these writers deal with sin they glow; when they deal with redeeming grace, they are using a tool they cannot handle.

I appreciated reading great fiction with its dramatic portrayal of sin, and the ability of the writers to point out my sin. But this reading left me a sinner. To complete my summer reading, I had to re-read the Gospel story.

J. R. BROKHOFF
PHILLIPS PACKER ELLIOTT
EDWARD W. STIMSON
WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN

Matching the Master

J. R. BROKHOFF, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N. C.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.—I Peter 2:21.

The death of Arturo Toscanini during the early part of this year marked the end of an era. He was considered the world's foremost symphony orchestra conductor. Time said, "The world knows no musician to fill his place." What was the secret of Toscanini's great success? It was his life-long effort to match the masters of music. It was said of him, "He made fidelity to the composer his watchword," and "His abiding interest was to come closer to the secrets of Beethoven and a few other eternal masters." Toscanini gave his life to knowing the masters so thoroughly and intimately that he could reproduce as perfectly as possible what the masters had in mind when they wrote their compositions. It can be said of Toscanini that he was one who matched the masters of music.

This is the exact purpose of a Christian's life. His total ambition should be to match the Master. Peter expresses it in our text: "For to this you have been called . . . that you should follow in his steps." To be like Jesus is our calling. To follow in His steps is the reason for our living. We are to be so like Him that the world will see Christ in us. As Toscanini gave his life to matching the masters of music, are we trying to match our Master in His life and work?

I

How can we today match the Master? One way is by being good. In the passage from which our text comes, Peter testifies about Jesus, "He committed no sin." We agree. Jesus was the most wonderful person who ever lived. He was a totally self-less person. Love dominated his life. No one to this day can find fault with him. Even the unbiased voluntarily declare his perfection. Pilate repeatedly told the crowd, "I find no fault at all in this man." The Roman soldier, a hardened and mercenary professional killer, exclaimed when Jesus died, "Certainly this man was innocent." History continues to witness that Jesus was spotless and sinless. Flaws can be found in all other men whether they are Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, or Francis of Assisi. No one has ever found a flaw in Jesus' life.

Christians are called, according to Peter's text, to match the matchless Master. At once we rebel. We almost shout in protest: 'That is impossible! It is too high for us, we cannot attain unto it. It would mean perfection, and who can be perfect?" In spite of our rebellion, the expectation is still there. That is what makes being a Christian so hard and challenging. Did Jesus not teach in the Sermon on the Mount, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." Jesus died on the cross for our sins that we might die to sin. We are to die daily to self and sin. We are to nail our sinful natures to the cross and rise and live thereafter righteously. We are not meant to sin; we are redeemed to live perfectly.

Is it posible to match the Master by being as good as He was? One way to do it is by growing in the Christian life. Being good is not a sudden matter but a matter of development over the year. Some Christian groups claim that when one is converted or joins the church that he becomes perfect and does not sin thereafter. That is utter foolishness. Anyone with a little common sense can see instantly that every human does wrong even as a Christian. The best answer to the claim of the "Perfectionists" is to page through the New Testament and the history of the church and to see that the greatest Christians claimed they were the worst sinners.

Being good like the Master is then a matter of slow and gradual growth over the years. It starts with infancy when the child of a few weeks is brought for baptism. That is the starting point, for the child receives the Holy Spirit. The Spirit begins to work in the child from that day toward goodness. In a Christian home the training for goodness continues through instruction, prayers, going to church and the church school and through the godly example of parents. If we have been born and raised in a Christian home, we are most fortunate. What an advantage we have over those who were brought up without this Christian nurture and who in adulthood turns Christian and begins a life of righteousness! On the other hand, it ought to make us ask whether we are as good as we ought to be after these years of Chris-

an influence and training. Should we not be etter than we are?

Since being good is a matter of growth, we eed not be discouraged with our continual ailing to be all that we want to be. It is true ve fail and slip into sin. The spirit may be villing, but the flesh is weak. The Christian life s a daily struggle between the higher and lower elves. It means constantly saying no to self. t means disciplining the instincts and our raw, ugged human nature. There is a battle against vil that rages daily inside us. Temptations come ast and need to be turned aside by the power f God's Word. The important point, however, s not that we are not what we should be, but hat we are growing. If a person is slowly adancing, there is hope and commendation. This eans tomorrow we should be better than we ere yesterday. Ten years from now we should e a stronger person in faith and one who posesses to a larger degree the Christian graces.

Another way of becoming good to match he Master's goodness is to let Christ's spirit well in us. Jesus' goodness comes to us by smosis or by contagion. The more we are with im, the more time we spend with him, the nore we become like him. It means we need o have the mind of Christ. A Christian will pend time with him in prayer and meditation. Worship will expose the soul to Christ's spirit. f we daily read the words of Jesus until they ecome second nature, if we will spend time nough with Jesus that we get to know him betr than even a member of our family, then the oodness of Jesus will come to us because we ossess his spirit.

It is like a luminous cross. The cross is in he bedroom with the light on. We turn the ght off to go to bed and we see the cross lowing. We know that the cross has no light. t had only a borrowed light. It is still reflectng the light of the bedroom. That happens with Christian when he comes into the light of esus' presence. After leaving Jesus, we contnue to reflect his goodness. That happened to he early Christians. When the Disciples were alled to appear before the Councilors of Jerusalem, the rulers "recognized that they had een with Jesus." Why? Because those same en — Annas and Caiphas — who had seen esus now saw the same spirit in the Disciples. hey spoke boldly. They were unafraid. They ere willing to suffer and die for their faith as hough it were a privilege. By being with Jesus prayer, the Disciples reflected the goodness f Jesus.

This goodness that we get from being with esus is not our own. Therefore, we cannot claim as our own. There is no reason to be proud or harisaical if we happen to live a better life an non-Christians. We are not proud over any moral attainment, because it is not ours at all. A gardener once moved a thorn bush into his garden and grafted a rose branch into it. The next year the thorn bush had roses and was very proud of the fact. Another bush in the garden said to the thorn bush: "You should not boast. The beauty is not yours. It was given to you by the rose."

When we match the Master by being good, we cannot hide it even if we wanted to. The world sees it and glorifies God for it. If the world can see no difference between us and the world, there is something radically wrong with our Christianity. This was not the case with the first Christians. The early followers of Jesus were not called Christians until the world looked at the congregation in Antioch and started calling them Christians. Why do you think the world gave the followers of Jesus this name? Do you not think it was because these believers were so much like Christ that they gave them the name "Christ-ians"? It must have been so because the Christians in Antioch were so embedded in the faith and so zealous in their Christian religion that they were the first to send out missionaries — Paul and Barnabas — to other sections of the Roman empire. Are you a Christian in the sense that you are like Christ? A Christian is a Christ-man. He matches the Master by being good.

To match the Master is not only being good but doing good. Jesus did good because he was good. It is hardly necessary to tell a Christian congregation that Jesus spent his life doing good. We take a swift glance at Jesus' life and see at once that his entire life was devoted to doing good in terms of service. His birth brought a promise of peace to the world. His dying hour brought a prayer of forgiveness to his murderers, salvation to a sinner, care for his mother, and redemption for the entire world when he closed his life with "It is finished."

We read about Jesus' going about doing good, but the tragedy is that we Christians are content to just going about. Yet Jesus taught that we should do good to our fellowmen like he served mankind. He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye should love one another as I have loved you." Notice the words, "As I have loved you." At the Last Supper Jesus stooped and washed the feet of the Disciples to teach a lesson in humble service. When he finished, he asked, "Do you know what I have done to you? I have given you an example that you also should do as I have done to you." Did Jesus not say that not every one who said, "Lord, Lord," would get to heaven but he who did the will of his Father? Again he taught, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

A Christian is one who tries to match the Master by doing good. Some think that to follow the Master in this, they must do big and great things like Paul or Luther or Schweitzer. That need not be so. Every Christian can match the Master in doing good according to the place God has put him. It may be in the home as a housewife, or as a secretary in an office, or as a student or teacher in a school, or as a worker in a factory. Consider some possibilities as we see them in everyday life.

A teen-ager wins a bicycle at a gathering. When told of his luck, he says, "I have a bike. Give it to some boy who does not have any." There is a simple case of doing good. It was an act of unselfishness. Isn't this what Jesus would have done?

It is reported that 53 convicts of the Ohio State Penitentiary volunteered to serve as guinea pigs for cancer research. They offered to let cancer researchers graft cancer tissue into their healthy bodies. There was a high probability they would get it and eventually die. Why would they risk their lives for a society that would seem to them to deprive them of life and liberty by life imprisonment? They could easily have been filled with bitterness and said that in so far as they were concerned, society could go and die. No, as matching the Master, they were willing to face the possibility of death that society might have life. Are those convicts not really heroes? In their way they are matching the Master by doing good.

Here is an invalid who spends her years in bed or a wheel chair. When an aged member of the congregation died, she asked, "Why does God leave me and take others? I can't get out and do anything for Him or anybody." The pastor replied, "Apparently God has a reason for leaving you here. You are serving Him in this position. You may not know that every person who comes to see you leaves a better person. Each feels uplifted by your sense of humor and lovely spirit." They also serve Christ who only stand and wait. If we want to serve Christ, we can do it in every and any situation of life.

A neighbor can do good in his local surroundings. In the neighborhood, there may be sickness or sorrow. It may be that you can serve as a baby-sitter to permit the parents to take care of outside responsibilities. It may be you can send over a meal to relieve the family of cooking in this time of trial. There are so many things that can be done to help our neighbors if we would just stop and think of what would help them. This is what Jesus would have done. This is what He would have us do.

A congregation can go about doing good in a way the individual cannot help. Isn't this one reason for a congregation's existence? Our funds should never be all for ourselves, our beautiful churches, or our church program. A congregation must exist to serve the needy around it. Here is a family that has an excessive number of times in a hospital. The bills are so high that the family may lose car and house. Over here is another family where the father gets sick and cannot work for a time. The rent continues, the children need food, but the Welfare Society gives only a pittance. When a congregation steps in and pays the rent and brings in groceries, it is matching the Master by doing good.

Doing good in itself is not enough to match the Master. The motive is as important as the act. If we do good to reap joy, it does not count with God. If we are hepeful to make people dependent on us or to win friends, this does not mean anything to God. We are to do good for Jesus' sake only. What we do for others we do for Jesus. Our mission is to serve and please him. Some years ago an Army surgeon performed a difficult operation on a Korean peasant. After hours of hard work in the operating room, the surgeon came out white with fatigue and his hands shook with exhaustion. Someone asked him how much he would get for the operation if he were in the States. He said, "I guess about $4500." "What will you get here?" He replied, "I suppose the lady's gratitude and the Master's smile." That is all that counts in doing good for others — the Master's smile. We have the assurance that when we do good for others in Jesus' Name the Master smiles on us. There is no greater reward.

We know now how we can match the Master by being and doing good. But why should we try to match Him? Why did Toscanini give his life to matching the masters of music? One time he gave the answer when at the close of a concert he said to his orchestra: "It is Beethoven. He is everything." When we admire a person and hold him in highest regard, we instinctively want to be like him. A little boy walked into a state capitol building and saw on the ceiling of the rotunda a picture of Theodore Roosevelt sitting on his horse. The boy took off his hat and held it by his side and said, "I want to be like him." When a youth becomes impressed and infatuated with an actor or actress, he or she wants to be like that person down to the smallest detail.

If you and I are to match the Master, we must have the highest respect for Jesus. Is Jesus everything to us? Would we rather be like him than anyone else? What does Christ mean to you and me? Can we say, "Jesus my Lord, my God, my all"? If we can, then from this day forth our calling in life will be to follow the example set by Jesus and daily walk in his steps.

nown by Our Accent

PHILLIPS PACKER ELLIOTT, First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, New York

After a little while, they that stood by came and said to Peter, "of a truth thou also art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee."—Matthew 26:73

Our text comes from a dramatic scene, the casion when Peter denied his Master. Jesus on trial in the house of Caiphas the high iest. Peter had followed "from afar," and aited in the courtyard while the trial was go- g on. As one of the Gospels has it, "he was arming himself by the fire." He thought he ould not be noticed, but he was. Rembrandt as an unforgettable picture of Peter's denial: mply two faces, that of a young girl, with unting in her eyes, and the other the bearded ce of Peter, as he denied the girl's accusa- on that he was one of the followers of Jesus. gain either this maid or another charged him ith association with the Master, and again he nied it. Then some in the group around him cused him of the same thing, and gave the ief reason for thus believing—namely his ac- nt. "Of a truth thou art also one of them, for y speech betrayeth thee." He had the Gali- an accent, and that gave him away.

I

How much an accent tells about a person! ast summer I sat on a bus making the long d rather wearisome ride between Cambridge d Oxford. Two young men were directly be- nd me, and fell into conversation. I do not member what they talked about, but I re- ember clearly the sharp difference in accent one cultivated, restrained, precise, the other oad, limited in vocabulary, and with the in- nation we usually describe as "Cockney." They d much in common, obviously, and they emed to enjoy each other; but they were miles part in background and privilege. Their accent trayed them.

We feel that everyone has an accent except rselves. Others speak strangely; we speak nat- ally. People from other lands speak English ell, after years of training and association with nglish-speaking people, but always there will main a touch which tells of a different ton- ue, a native language which cannot be com- etely removed. They speak, as we say, "with accent." But so do we all. The part of the untry we come from, the people with whom e have spent our early years, all the strange d intangible influences which make up the ckground of a life, create a way of speaking hich is distinctly our own. It fastens itself on from the earliest years, and seems impossible eradicate.

It is this which is likely to show our true ture. When people have consciously affected certain kind of speech, they get along fairly well by watching themselves lest they stumble into their former state. But then an emergency will arise; they are thrown off guard, they for- get their pose and manner and resort to their natural words and their basic and familiar ac- cent. We are astounded at others, and some- times at ourselves, when strong emotions almost overwhelm us and our real nature comes forth. Then we see people, and ourselves, for what we really are like. Whether Peter had tried to disguise his accent or not, the emotion of this particular time and experience would have thrown him back to his normal speech, and those who noticed such things would have spotted him at once as someone from the far north, a Galilean like the young teacher who was being tried within.

We think today, then, of the accents of our lives, the meanings which they carry. This goes far beneath the surface. Words are used by the thousands every day; actions of all kinds are performed by everyone in the course of his daily tasks. These are important in themselves, they carry our lives along. But more important than the words and deeds is the accent which they carry, the meaning and attitude which they convey.

For the same words can create quite differ- ent effects. Spoken in friendship they can be helpful; spoken in hostility they can crush an- other life. Sometimes we warn a person, "Smile when you say that," for if the smile is not there, the words might seem threatening. It is the tone, the flavor, the meaning, the accent that counts in what we say.

So is it with what we do. "Why did he do this?" we ask of an action which has caused some trouble. We say, "He did it thoughtless- ly," he did not mean it to seem as it did. But that is as serious as if he had taken thought of the wrong kind, for it means that he had fol- lowed some deep and instinctive motive, and that this deed expressed the whole bent of his life. But that same action might have been help- ful and appreciated if it had been done with care, and with the accent of friendship.

II

This carries over into the field of world af- fairs. National policy is not a cold and objec- tive matter as it relates to other nations. It al- ways carries an emotional meaning, it always has a certain accent. And the accent is often more important than the deed, and without the right accent the worthiest deed can be mis- understood and even resented. A recent paper

carried the stirring word of the three planes that flew around the world in 45 hours. What a magnificent feat, and how it stirred the blood, much as did Lindbergh's flight to Paris in 1927! But see the accent which was given to that feat in the news report. This is the way the report started on the first page of **The Times:** "Riverside, California, Jan. 18:—Three airforce stratofortresses completed today a 45-hour 19-minute non-stop around-the-world flight. It was made to prove the United States could drop a hydrogen bomb anywhere on earth." And the magnificence of the achievement is turned into a shadowy threat by the accent given to it. To the countries over which the planes passed there was sent the word, "We could drop the hydrogen bomb here, or here, or here." And the event itself will lose its lustre because of the accent which has been given to it.

But the same action could have had another accent, an accent commensurate with the grandeur of the achievement itself. Why not say what is equally true: It was made to prove that the United States could drop a package of Salk polio serum, or packages of food, or clothing, or men to help in emergencies, anywhere on earth." Then this flight would show, quite honestly, the benevolent designs of the United States. These designs are not absent from our nation's life; they are central to it. But we stress the wrong things, we give the wrong accent to what we do, and our best deeds seem political or self-centered because of the atmosphere in which we do them. But let the accent of goodwill be the dominant one and the whole life of the world will take on a new hope.

Christianity is the accent given to life. It is the way in which things are done, the attitude which accompanies our daily words and works. Our problem is to learn to speak with this accent. Is it hopeless? It often seems this way. It is even harder to acquire this attitude than to learn a new tongue. We despair of ever learning to speak the way which puts us in the company of Christ. But life CAN be changed, even as can one's speech. There may remain traces of the old language, but the new accent has taken over, and this marks a new attitude and approach. We want to acquire an accent which will carry the spirit of Christ, which will betoken an attitude and approach which is like his own. This is our task as Christians; to change one accent for another. How does one acquire this Galilean accent, so that whatever may be our tongue or language, whether cultivated or Cockney, this is the influence, the effect, which we convey to others?

III

In the first place, we are to make an awareness of Christ a part of every experience. **In His Steps** was the title of the book written by Charles M. Sheldon half a century ago, and helpful to thousands of Christians who wanted to put their religion into daily, practical effect. But to think of our daily path in this century, as being marked out by His daily steps in ancient Palestine, is too difficult and detailed a task. To ask, "What would Jesus do?" in every situation which confronts us makes us ponder problems which are impossible of solution from that rather strained standpoint. We don't quite know what He would do in this situation or that, and to find a rigid set of rules is to seek an impossible goal.

But we can be aware, always, that He is not absent from this part of life. In this word I am speaking, this conference, this piece of work, this problem I am trying to solve — in all this, the warp and woof of daily experience, He is not absent; He is here. This awareness will have many effects on us, it will create a tone for all that we do. It will soften the harshness with which we otherwise might speak and judge another; it will check impatience with our fellowmen; it will accent all we say and do. How we are to find this awareness is something that each must work out for himself. But do it we must. Otherwise we are constantly belying our Christian profession. We justify the world in its chief and most valid criticisms of the church and of Christian people — that they are all right when they worship, and are keenly aware of the presence of their Master, but they do not carry that awareness into their lives day by day, and therefore do not carry this spirit into the midst of life. We deny our Lord by ruling Him out, either deliberately or unconsciously, from the words and works of each day. But just to think of Him, just a swift vision of His presence, just a remembrance of His love and power, will be enough to give the accent to what we say and do which will remind those who stand by that we are His.

Moreover, in the crises of life we are to stand and claim allegiance to Him. We belong to Him already; let us claim it when the critical times come upon us. Peter, it is recorded, followed "afar off." He should have been nearby, he should have kept going right beside the Master, or immediately behind Him, until the door of Caiphas' house was slammed in his face. Peter went just so far and then stopped. His impulse was right in wanting to be near Jesus in this time of trial and pain; for him as well as for His Lord. He went to a certain point and then denied Him; stopped just when the bond of loyalty could and should have been most strong. Here was his great chance to claim allegiance, he had the same accent as the Master, he was already regarded as one of His band; and he could have stood up in pride and

y and said, "Of course I am one of His — ank God I, too, have the Galilean accent."

Finally, we are to be ourselves as Christians. e are to let ourselves go on the stream of faith. ople think of the religious life as tense, strict, most an imprisoned state. Of course, there is e need for control and self-discipline always. ıt the Christian should be the most relaxed rson in the world. He has yielded himself, d now he is to trust his life to that commit- ent. "Trust thyself," as Emerson put it; but en more "Trust thyself as a Christian;" let e prior and basic commitment of your life made, and all else will follow.

That is why the Christian life gives such joy. is a real "release." It does not make us af- cted in our speech or in our actions. There is thing stilted or artificial about it. It urges to be ourselves, to speak and to act as the ristian commitment persuades us. In sending t the disciples upon their first journey, Jesus seemed to be almost indifferent to the difficulties they might encounter. He said that when they were delivered up to courts, when they were in trouble, and didn't know what to say, they need not worry about it in advance. For "it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak." Their lives were committed, they could depend upon that allegiance, and when they spoke it would be with the Galilean accent; they would speak naturally and inevitably for Him and His cause.

In our own lives our words and our deeds, even though small in themselves, can be accompanied by such a spirit that the language and the deed become submerged in the attitude, and the spirit becomes all that is remembered. We can be known perhaps best this way — not by our words, nor by our works, but can be said of us, "Thou also art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee."

sus Encounters the Sincere

EDWARD W. STIMSON, Dundee Presbyterian Church, Omaha, Nebraska

Early in his ministry Jesus encountered a ıcere, independent-minded man. His name ıs Nathanael Bar-Tolmai, and he came from ına of Galilee, only a few miles from Naza- th on the road toward Capernaum and the a of Galilee. Nathanael was not the sort of an to be stampeded by the popular enthu- ısm of a crowd. He had a keen intellectual in- rest in what was going on, religiously, in his orld, but was liable to be a bit skeptical and thhold judgment until convinced in his own ind. If he lived today he would go to hear lly Graham preach, but would not easily be rsuaded to follow the crowd forward when e invitation is given.

This was exactly his reaction in the similar uation when John the Baptist was the sensa- n of Palestine as a preacher of repentance. hen all Israel thronged out to hear him and baptized, Nathanael withheld his judgment. hers swayed by John's fiery denunciation and reats of imminent punishment, rushed into e water in droves, but Nathanael stayed back, ietly watching, weighing the whole scene in s own mind, in a relatively secluded place der the sheltering branches of a fig-tree.

It was there one morning that Jesus' observ- t eye noted him, and quietly read his char- ter. Jesus had just returned from his forty ys of fasting and prayer and temptation in e wilderness, and John had pointed him out t the day before to some of his disciples, ying "Behold the Lamb of God." This morn- g Jesus decided to go to Galilee, but before left, he found Philip of Bethsaida and chal- lenged him to follow him. Philip, responding with tremendous enthusiasm, was so impressed that he remembered his skeptical friend Nathanael. He went to find him, and said, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

But Nathanael, who came from a rival town near Nazareth, where there was no little contempt for its inhabitants, only smiled quizzically and quoted a saying he had heard often at home, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But Philip answered with the only answer that would impress an independent minded person like Nathanael: "Come and see," he said. "Make your own observation and draw your own conclusion!" It was a fair challenge, and Nathanael responded.

I

I wish I could have seen that meeting. Our Scripture account is so brief. It says, "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him and said of him, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.'" It was a piercing observation and a telling compliment. Jesus had read his sincerity clearly. The remark gains meaning when we remember the historic reference. Being Israelites, they all knew that Jesus was referring to the experience of their forefather, Jacob, who took the new name of Israel after his wrestling with God at the ford of the river Jabbock. Prior to this, Jacob had been a deceitful man. By guile he had cheated his brother Esau out of his birthright and his blessing, and by trick-

ery he had become rich at the expense of his Uncle Laban. But that night God wrestled with Jacob until he became a new man, Israel, no longer a deceiver and a supplanter, but an honest, forthright, sincere, trustworthy man. This was what Jesus referred to when he called Nathanael an Israelite indeed.

Nathanael was startled and surprised by the apt compliment. "How do you know me?" he asked. Jesus answered, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig-tree, I saw you." Now Nathanael was astounded that Jesus should have taken notice of him there in his retreat under the fig-tree, and have read his motives and understood him so completely. "Rabbi," he exclaimed, "you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel." Something in Jesus' presence, his radiance of personality, his sympathetic insight, his deep abounding love, his personal magnetism, must have been evident, far beyond the words the Master had said, to win such a response. The contrast between Jesus' spirit and that of John the Baptist must also have been evident. John's fierce denunciation of sin made the main appeal of his call to repentance one of fear. Jesus called to repentence, too, but he approached with encouraging appreciation of what goodness in one he could praise. But Jesus chided Nathanael for responding so precipitously. "Because I said to you 'I saw you under the fig-tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these. Truly, truly I say unto you, you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Again the historic reference was to Jacob, who in his dream at Bethel had seen the heavens opened and a ladder up to heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Jesus was saying that by following him he would have far more first-hand divinely inspired experience that would be confirmatory evidence that he was the Messiah, the Son of God.

II

I am interested in Nathanael today, because he represents a formerly dominant type of character in our American life, which some sociologists say is becoming a vanishing social characteristic. In the current terms, Nathanael was an "inner directed person" as contrasted with "other directed persons."

Some of you have read "The Lonely Crowd" by David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, a report based upon a Yale University research project of the changing American character.

Riesman says that during the past centuries, since the Renaissance and Reformation and until recently, America and the West were dominated by independent-minded, ambitious, enterprising people, willing to take the risks of being different. This was the America of Pilgrims and pioneers, of revolutionary forefathers and economic adventurers. These people gloried in competition and wanted to be winners. To achieve and accomplish was more important to them than to be popular. They met changing circumstances and difficulties on the basis of their own strong inner principles, which their training had built into their character like a gyroscope, which kept them unswervingly on their course. These were inner directed men and women, most useful in an expanding productive economy.

But now, say these sociologists, the dominant American character is changing. We are already changing from an expanding productive society to a leveling off, consuming society. (Riesman's book, written in 1950, did not anticipate the maintenance of the post-war birth rate). People, more and more, are becoming most concerned about public relations, and what other people think about them. They are less competitive, afraid of being individualistic, desirous of security, and most responsive to the opinions of their peers. Rather than keeping to a gyroscopic, inner-directed course, they act by a sort of social radar, always sending out feeling impulses to see just where other people are before they move. They are afraid to have opinions of their own, and watch to see what everyone else says before expressing themselves. People follow the crowd in consumer choices of brands and styles, and dare not be different in what they buy, a tendency constantly stimulated by the advertising media.

A friend of mine was telling me the other day about how a man tested this at a reception down at the art museum. He would stand before a picture and make strong derogatory remarks about it, and soon others would gather around and agree with those remarks. A little later he would stand before the same picture and praise it vociferously, and soon a group would gather around him and others would be making similar praising remarks.

In this chameleon-minded society there is far less skepticism regarding religion or anything else than there used to be. There is more ready conformity and less real sincerity! So we have "other directed persons."

I think most of us would agree that such a tendency to greater social conformity is present in contemporary American life, but we also know that in every age some people have been more inner-directed while others have been more other-directed.

I cannot speak very much upon this subject without betraying where my own personal preferences lie. I suppose I belong more to the vanishing American species. I have a double

se of it for I'm originally from Missouri, and u have to show me! I still prefer the indiualistic virtues:

. . . to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

In my youth I had my period of intense epticism, when I decided I wouldn't believe ything unless it commended itself to my own telligent judgment and squared with what I ew to be true from my scientific observaon. In art-appreciation, and I have more than passing interest in art, in music appreciation, d I have more than a cursory concern for d love of music, in literature and in every ltural expression, I have never been able to ake myself follow each current fad, and if offends my own aesthetic sense I won't pred to like it. To some this would seem a terle confession, proof that I am a back-number d getting old before my time. But I have been is way since my teens — and I am not alone! Actually, Christianity doesn't support 100% her the inner-directed or the other-directed aracter. A completely inner-directed person uld be a complete egotist, selfish and imssible. A completely other-directed person uld be cooperative but at the mercy of every owd, a crowd idolator with **no** character at . The Christian is **Christian-directed,** and that something else again.

III

We are concerned with what happens when rist encounters an inner-directed person, like athanael, like George Washington, Abraham ncoln, Andrew Carnegie, Herbert Hoover, Alrt Schweitzer. Dr. Sir William Osler — you ck your own great individualists.

The fact is that whenever such inner-directed ople encounter Jesus Christ they find themlves immediately challenged and thrilled. ere is one who knows us altogether, who has served us before we knew Him under our n fig-tree. Here is one who commends us r what honest integrity and sincerity we have, d never censures us for our demand for the varnished truth; who satisfied a doubting omas by showing him his wounds in his nds and his side, and who said, "If you abide my word, then are you truly my disciples, d you will know the truth and the truth will ke you free."

Above all, here is one who in superlative measure was free from social pressures. He had no peers. He was utterly unconcerned with what the best people of his day thought of his conduct when he healed on the Sabbath day, praised the despised outlaw race of Samaritans, and ate with publicans and sinners. He challenged the arbiters of the social conduct of his day by calling them hypocrites. His worst censure was against hypocrisy. And in all this he was not boorish and egotistical, for his own inner-direction was completely overruled and surrendered to the ultimate and perfect will and direction of His Heavenly Father.

With constructive individuality and freedom he made all things new. His vision and understanding of the Kingdom of God on earth is still the solution of the world's problem, while his insight into human character, as He knew what was in man still thrills the honest independent, student of human psychology. When we encounter Him, we independent, somewhat lonely individualists, we are captured by an understanding love which both commends our sincerity and shows us how not to abuse it. And His love helps us to make wonderful friendships with others without bowing our principles to the lower demands of the crowd.

Actually, Christ as Protestant Christians have known him through the Bible, has been more the inspiration of our enterprising individualistic character in the America of the Puritan tradition, than has been the expanding population and economic production which David Riesman identifies as the cause. So long as Christ is encountered in a vital way in our religious life, the ability to transcend the pressures of the crowd and stand independently for the highest will not be lost. And that highest, in love, will be found to be for the best good of others, whether they appreciate it and give it social approval, or whether they make true again Jesus' prediction that his followers must take up their crosses.

But if you are sincere, and are willing to come and see for yourself, you will find Christ such a challenge to your independent moral and spiritual judgment, and such a perfect answer to the need of understanding and purpose in your otherwise unsatisfied and lonely heart, that you will want to say with Nathanael, "Teacher, you are the Son of God! You are the King the world needs." And in following Him, you too will see heaven opened!

nty in the IGY

WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN, First Methodist Church, Stuart, Florida

The above title has somewhat the aparance of an alegbraic formula, but its mean is obvious. Last July 1 we entered what scientists call an International Geophysical Year. During this period of eighteen months, sixty-four nations have joined in a study which will

cost half a billion dollars. There has been set up a worldwide network of observation stations to study the sea, sky, winds, tides, earthquakes, gravity, glaciers, cosmic rays — anything and everything pertaining to the physical world in which we live.

I

The title seeks to focus our attention upon this idea: the continued relevance of the Christian faith in the IGY. Regardless of what the scientists discover, they will not bring to light any facts which will render obsolete the Christian Gospel. The message of Christ is still needed, and will be needed, during and beyond this IGY. The truth is still in order, even as Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone." The material is only one side of life. The IGY deals only with physical, material things. It deals with the world around us; Christianity deals with the world within us.

We are enthusiastic about this scientific undertaking. Let no one take lightly what is to be accomplished during this year of investigation. A liberal and open-minded approach to religion demands that we welcome every intellectual advancement, every step forward which brings new truth to light. What we are here contending is that man's spiritual needs remain the same in every age, and that regardless of what scientists may discover about our physical world, it remains unendingly true that we have spiritual needs which can be met only by the presence of God in our lives.

An intensive study of our world should show even more clearly the fact of an Infinite Mind behind the universe. Contrary to drawing us away from God, it should make us understand more fully that this world is too intricate to be an accident.

In our rebellion against pagan ideas we have often thrown aside the atoms of good which were present; in determining to turn away from half truths we have sometimes also turned away from whole truths. In our horror of pantheism we have missed God's revelation of Himself in nature.

Certainly we cannot be satisfied with a doctrine which sees nature and deity as equivalent, nor which understands nature to be merely an extension of God. Neither can we be satisfied with a doctrine which totally separates the two. The Psalmist wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." A deep spiritual sensitivity will enable us to see a revelation of God in the beauty of nature. Even as the Psalmist recognized the fact that the starry heavens spoke of their Creator, so must we understand that God has spoken, and speaks, by means other than Scripture.

Paradoxically, the Church which has vigorously defended the idea of divine revelation has also set bounds upon that revelation. The Church has announced the canon of Scripture closed, saying in effect to the Almighty, "Thus far shalt Thou come, and no farther." Yet who are we to mark the limits of God's revelation? What right have we to set finite bounds upon the Infinite's activity?

This is no attempt to dethrone Scripture; it is, however, a plea that we not confine God to an ancient Book! The Bible is only one of the means by which He speaks. Moreover, the Church has said there can be no new additions to the canon. Yet God is alive; He is active; He yet speaketh! By intuitive means He continues to make Himself known to the souls of men. Through the world of nature, which reveals His laws of creation and growth, we catch a glimpse of His glory.

Men of science ought always to be men of faith. The investigations to be carried on during this IGY should convine us even more thoroughly that a divine Intellect has devised our world. Contrary to living in a haphazard, topsy-turvy world, we are inhabitants of a cosmos where divinely instituted laws govern all things. The results of this study will bring us to a deeper appreciation of God's creative power.

II

When we have analyzed our world and have recognized the creative hand of the Almighty, we should go beyond this to realize His creativeness within the human soul. Man is God's supreme creation; it is only of man that the Bible says, "God breathed into him the breath of life." It would be difficult to believe that God's creative power should be present in the natural world surrounding man but absent within him. Here, of all places, within the human soul, we must expect to find the creative presence of the Divine.

The fact of the divine Presence relates the life of Christ to our own lives with fuller meaning. Suppose Jesus were only a human being, and nothing more. Should that be true, the goodness of his life, the purity of his character, the holiness of his will, these would turn us away from Him. For if He were no more than a product of humanity, his very perfection would shatter our own hopes of matching his life.

A view of Jesus which forgets the divine within Him has destroyed his meaning for us. The fact of the creative presence of God draws us to Him irresistibly, in order that we may be imbued with a like Spirit. Jesus faced life in a victorious strength, and taught his followers that they too may share God's power. Far from being remote from our lives, God's creativeness works within the human soul. A study of our universe during this IGY should make us